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Behavioral differences between school superintendents who achieve their positions through promotion in the home district (place bound) and those who achieve their positions through movement from one school system to another (career bound) were analyzed by means of interviews with 61 superintendents in one county. The study examined the rate of adoption of educational innovations, positions in the social structure of school superintendents, and reference group orientations. The data reveal that: (1) Career bound superintendents are quicker to adopt educational innovations; (2) place bound men are less involved in the social network of superintendents and have lower status among chief school officials; and (3) the reference group of place bound superintendents is formed by their subordinates, who are not the most accurate in evaluating the superintendents' work. A related document is EA 002 419. (Author/MLF)

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A Project Report

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CAREER AND PLACE BOUND SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS: SOME SOCIOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

Richard O. Carlson

Whether a school superintendent has achieved his position through promotion in his home district (place bound) or through movement from one school district to another (career bound) is a matter of significance for his role performance.[1]

The decision to wait for the superintendency in the home district or to find one elsewhere is involved and difficult. The man who uproots his family, breaks his ties, and chooses to go, indicates by his action that he places a higher priority on a career as a school superintendent than he does on living in a specific city or community. He is more committed to a career as superintendent than to the location of employment. Thus, he is called career bound. By definition, he has been elected to the superintendency from outside the system and has never served the district in any capacity other than as superintendent.

The man who waits for the superintendency acts as if he wants a career as superintendent only if it can be had in a specific place: his home school district. His career suggests that he is more committed to place of employment than to a career as superintendent. Therefore, he has been called place bound. The place bound superintendent is an insider: he has been elected to the position from within the school district and has served the district in capacities other than in the superintendency.

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[1] See R. O. Carlson, Executive Succession and Organizational Change (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, University of Chicago, 1962) and R. O. Carlson, "Succession and Performance Among School Superintendents," Administrative Science Quarterly, 6:210-227, September, 1961.

The terms "career bound" and "place bound," as designations of types of superintendents, are meant to convey two fundamental differences between these office holders. One difference, which has been mentioned, is that of unlike priorities assigned to the importance of career as superintendent versus living in a specific location. The other fundamental difference meant to be conveyed by the terms is that while the place bound superintendent has a history in the school district and, therefore, has a formed part in the organization's informal activities and a heritage of social relations, the career bound superintendent lacks a history and a heritage of social relations in the school district. He is a stranger, an outsider, whose loyalties and commitments are unknown. He is neither constrained nor facilitated by a set of established social relations.

These fundamental dissimilarities permit the generation of a number of hypotheses about behavioral differences between career bound and place bound types. They have been shown to be of substantial importance as conditioners of the administrative behavior of these two types of superintendents. While focusing upon the problem of executive succession and the general question of what happens in a school system as it takes on a new chief executive, a number of propositions stemming from these career differences were explored and reported.[2]

As an extension of this work and as a side product of a study of the diffusion of educational innovations,[3] this paper will direct attention to rates of adoption of new practices, positions in the social structure of superintendents, and reference group orientations of career and place bound school superintendents.

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Part of the study of diffusion is reported in R. O. Carlson "School Superintendents and Adoption of Modern Math: A Social Structure Profile," Chapter 14, M. Miles (editor), Innovation in Education (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964).

Adoption of New Practices

It has been noted that the propensity to change a school system in the first few years in office is not the same for both career and place bound superintendents. The difference seems to stem from several sources. (1) The career bound man has a higher commitment to the career of superintendent, a position the training for which stresses advancement in the educative process and "keeping up with the times." (2) The place bound superintendent is only hired when the board defines the school as being properly administered, while only an outsider is hired when the board is unhappy with the way the schools are administered. Thus, the outsider often has a mandate from the board but the insider does not. (3) It is at this point that the history of an insider acts as a constraining force in respect to contemplated changes. His history invokes a question in the minds of the school board like this: if your proposal is so good, how come you didn't or couldn't convince your predecessor to institute the change? Being without a mandate, and having been an understudy for a superintendent who satisfied the board, the place bound man is required to make a stronger case for his proposed changes than is the career bound type.

As evidence of this noted difference in propensity to change the organization, it was found that career bound superintendents more than place bound superintendents add positions to their administrative staff in the first few years in office and also are more prone to change and add to the rules, regulations and policies of the school district.[4]

As an extension of this logic and general finding, the proposition was tested that the rate of adoption of new educational innovations is different

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[4]R. O. Carlson, Executive Succession and Organizational Change, op. cit.

Table I

Rate of Adoption of Modern Math and Type of Superintendent

Year of Adoption	Career Bound N = 23 Cumulative Per Cent	Place Bound N = 20 Cumulative Per Cent
1958	4	0
1959	22	0
1960	48	20
1961	70	55
1962	91	70
1963	91	85

for the two types: that career bound superintendents are quicker to adopt innovations than place bound superintendents.[5]

The use of "modern" mathematical concepts, or so called modern math was first introduced in the county under study in 1958, and by 1963 had been adopted by over 80 percent of the school districts. Table I shows the cumulative per cent of adoption of modern math by the two types of superintendents year by year from the time of its introduction until 1963 among

[5] This proposition and all the others reported here were tested among the population of school superintendents in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. The county had 68 superintendents. Four had been in their positions less than two years; they were not interviewed. In addition, one man was on extended sick leave and could not be interviewed and two other superintendents would not grant interviews. The total number interviewed then was 61. On some propositions we will control for time in office and use data on 43 of the subjects. The 61 school systems ranged in size from 325 to 10,342 with a mean pupil enrollment of 3,095.

the 43 superintendents who were in their position from at least 1957 on and, therefore, had an equal opportunity in the time sense to adopt the practice.

Several features of the table are noteworthy. Modern math was first accepted by a career bound superintendent and over one fifth of the career bound men adopted modern math before it was adopted by a place bound superintendent. By 1960 about one-half of the career bound superintendents had adopted modern math while only 20 per cent of the place bound men had done so by that time. A similar cumulative per cent difference in rate of adoption is evident year by year except for the first and last years on the table.

The differences in the rate of adoption of modern math by the two types yielded a Mann-Whitney U score of 311 which has a p of .024 on a one-tail test.

The superintendents were also asked about the adoption of five educational innovations in addition to modern math--language labs, team teaching, programmed instruction, foreign language instruction in the elementary grades, and accelerated programs in secondary education. Table II shows the relationship between career type and adoption of the six new practices.

Table II, as did Table I, shows that place bound superintendents lag behind career bound superintendents in the adoption of new educational practices. The median number of innovations adopted was four for career bound men and two for place bound men.

The difference in the number of adoptions of these six innovations by the two career types yielded a Mann-Whitney U score of 339 which has a p value of .004 on a one-tail test.

In both tests of the proposition that career bound superintendents have a faster rate of adoption of innovations than place bound superintendents, the

Table II

Number of Selected Innovations Adopted by 1963

by Type of Superintendent

Number of Innovations Adopted	Career Bound N = 23 Cumulative Per Cent	Place Bound N = 20 Cumulative Per Cent
6	13	0
5 or more	30	10
4 or more	57	30
3 or more	78	45
2 or more	96	75
1 or more	100	100

data are supportive. The data show a significant difference in the rate of adoption of a single innovation as well as a significant difference in the number of innovations adopted over time. The cumulative effect of the unlike rates of acceptance of new practices can thus be seen.

Career Types and Position in the Social Structure

Social structure has to do with the relations that exist among people of a group, an organization or a society. Social structure is defined in terms of the distribution and differentiation of statuses and roles and patterns of interaction among members of a social system. A person's position in a social structure can be viewed from many perspectives and measured in many ways. Here we will concentrate on two elements of a superintendent's position: involvement and st us.

The proposition to be tested is that place bound superintendents are less involved and have lower status in the social structure than career bound superintendents. The proposition stems from the observation that the differences in the career patterns of the two types implies that the place bound man has a lower commitment to a career as superintendent than does the career bound man and assumes that low commitment will result in low involvement and low status.

Social Network Involvement

Friendship Choices Received. Like position in the social structure, social network involvement can be measured in a wide variety of ways. Four measures were used. One had a sociometric base in which each superintendent was asked to name his three best friends among the superintendents in the county. A few of the men named only one or two friends. Table III shows the distribution of friendship choices received by the two types of superintendents.

The median number of friendship choices received was four for career bound superintendents and two for place bound superintendents. The difference

Table III

Distribution of Friendship Choices Received

And Type of Superintendent

Number of Friendship Choices Received	Career Bound N = 28	Place Bound N = 33
14-15	0	1
12-13	0	0
10-11	0	0
8-9	4	1
6-7	3	2
4-5	7	1
2-3	5	12
0-1	9	16

in the distribution of friendship choices received by the two types yielded a chi-square value of 4.37 which is significant at the .05 level on a one-tail test.[6]

Visibility. Another measure of social network involvement comes from a professionalism question which was used (which will be described more fully in the next section). In responding to the question, the subjects had the alternatives of ranking the man in question on a professionalism scale or placing him in a "no opinion" category. It was assumed that the more times a man was placed in the "no opinion" category the less he was known by his peers

[6]When the test is made on only those in position for at least six years, the difference is significant at the .01 level.

and, therefore, the less he was involved. The median number of times a place bound superintendent was placed in the "no opinion" category was 18 and the median for career bound superintendents was 9. The differences in the distribution of "no opinion" assignments for the two types yielded a chi-square value of 8.9 which is significant at the .01 level on a one-tail test.[7]

Accuracy of Judgment. A third measure of involvement was indirect and dealt with accuracy of the superintendent's judgment. It was reasoned that if a superintendent was highly involved in the social system of superintendents, he would be able to make an accurate judgment of the general rate of adoption of new practices in his school district as compared with the rate of adoption of new practices in other districts in the county. By the same reasoning, it was assumed that the superintendent whose involvement was low would be unable to make an accurate judgment in this respect. This indirect measure of involvement was obtained by asking each subject about the adoption of six innovations in his district and if in his judgment his rate of adoption on these innovations was above or below average in comparison with other districts in the county. Coupling the median number of innovations adoptions in the county with each subject's judgment about his rate of adoptions enabled an estimate of the accuracy of judgments. Defining accurate judgment in this way, 48 per cent of the place bound superintendents and 75 per cent of the career bound superintendents made accurate judgments. The difference yields a chi-square value of 3.4 which is significant at the .05 level on a one-tail test.

Cosmopoliteness. Up to this point, the measures of social network involvement have dealt only with involvement of superintendents with other

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[7]When time in position is controlled and "no opinion" assignments are taken into consideration for only those superintendents who have been in their position since at least 1957, the difference is still significant at the .01 level.

superintendents in their immediate geographic area. And all three measures of involvement have supported the proposition that place bound superintendents are less involved in the social structure of school superintendents than are career bound men. Another dimension of involvement relates to involvement outside of the immediate geographic area. This dimension of involvement was assessed by the use of two questions. One simply asked the respondent to indicate the number of professional educational meetings held outside the county he had attended in a specified ten-month period. The other question asked the respondent to list the persons from whom he had sought counsel on educational practices in a specified ten-month period. The score on this measure of social network involvement was obtained by adding the number of meetings attended to the number of persons from whom counsel was sought who had headquarters outside the county. The median score was five for career bound superintendents and four for place bound superintendents. The differences in the distribution of these measures yielded a Mann-Whitney U of 325 which has a p value of .0239 on a one-tail test.

In summary, the data support the proposition that place bound superintendents are less involved in the social system of superintendents than are career bound superintendents. The data show that not only is the place bound superintendent less involved than the career bound superintendent in his immediate geographic area, but also less involved outside his immediate area.

Status

Another dimension of a superintendent's position in the social structure is his status. Status makes reference to a person's rank or position along some continuum. Status was measured on three continua: education, opinion leadership, and professionalism.

Education. Of the 33 place bound superintendents in the sample, seven had a Ph.D. or equivalent; 18 out of the 28 career bound superintendents had attained this level of education. The difference in these proportions yields a chi-square value of 9.9 which is significant at the .01 level on a one-tail test.

Opinion Leadership. The measurement of opinion leadership was achieved by asking each respondent to indicate those persons from whom he had sought counsel on educational practices in a specified ten-month period and recording the number of times each person in the sample had been sought out by one of his colleagues for advice. The median number of times place bound superintendents were sought for advice was zero and the median for career bound superintendents was two. The difference in the distribution of mentions as opinion leaders yielded a Mann-Whitney U of 312.5 which has a p value of .0154 on a one-tail test.[8]

Professionalism. The measurement of professionalism, the third status continuum used in the test of the proposition that place bound superintendents have lower status than career bound superintendents, involved the superintendents' judgment of each other. Each superintendent was asked to "indicate the characteristics of the truly professional school superintendent." Then after some discussion and examination of the suggested characteristics each superintendent was given a deck of cards containing the names of all of the superintendents in the county, one name per card, and asked to sort the cards on the basis of his own definition of the professional superintendents and his judgment of the individual superintendents. Six piles, numbered one through

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[8]The difference is also significant when time in position is controlled and the test is applied to only those men who had been in their positions for at least six years.

six, were used. Number one was a "no opinion" pile, and from there on the higher the number the more the superintendent being ranked conformed to the judge's definition of being professional. In addition, the respondents were instructed to place no more than twelve cards in any one pile. This necessitated an almost complete use of each category if the respondent made a judgment about each of his colleagues. (Ideally we should have asked for a complete ranking of the cards, that is, asked the respondents to sort out the top professional, the second ranked and so on. In order to reserve time for other questions, we selected the above procedure.) The scoring was achieved by recording for each superintendent the number of times his name was placed in the various piles, multiplied by the number of the pile, and dividing this total by the number of times he had been placed in any one of the piles numbered from two through six.[9] The "no opinion" pile was omitted in the above scoring procedure; its use has been indicated above.

The median professionalism score for all place bound superintendents was 3.68 and the median for all career bound superintendents was 4.47. The differences in the distribution of the professionalism scores among the two types yielded a Mann-Whitney U score of 285.5 which has a p value of .0054 on a one-tail test. When the sample was reduced to contain only those superintendents who had been in their positions at least six years, the median professionalism score for place bound superintendents was 3.92 and the median for career bound men was 4.52. The differences in this distribution yielded a Mann-Whitney U of 326.5 which has a p value of .0094 on a one-tail test.

Over all the data consistently show that career and place bound men achieve unlike positions in the social structure of school superintendents. The propositions that place bound men are less involved and have lower status than career bound men are supported by the findings.

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[9]The per cent of raters who placed a superintendent in the modal category or pile ranged from a low of 30 to a high of 93. The mean rater agreement was 45 per cent.

Reference Group

The common definition of a reference group is that group which the individual takes as a frame of reference for self-evaluation and attitude-formation. The superintendents in the sample were asked the following reference group type question: "Whose estimate of your work is most important to you?" And they were asked to place in order of importance the following groups: a local community group, their administrative subordinates, their school board, their teachers, other chief school administrators in the county, and others to be specified.

Because of the basic difference in the career patterns of the two types of superintendents, it was assumed that their reference group orientations would differ and that the history of the place bound superintendent in the district and his heritage of social relations would result in his being more oriented toward people in his system (administrative subordinates and teachers) than would be the case with career bound superintendents. Table IV shows the distribution of first and second rankings to the above question for the two types of superintendents.

In regard to the first ranked reference group, it is clear that place bound superintendents as a group tend to select their teachers as the group whose estimate of their work is most important; about 58 per cent of them ranked teachers first. Twenty-five per cent of the career bound superintendents ranked teachers first in importance. The difference in the proportions is significant at the .01 level on a one-tail chi-square test.

In terms of the group most commonly ranked second on the reference group type question, again it is apparent from Table IV that place bound superintendents are more prone to assign high importance to people with whom they work. Over

Table IV

Reference Group Orientation and Type of Superintendent

Reference Group	First Rank		Second Rank	
	Career Bound N = 28	Place Bound N = 33	Career Bound N = 28	Place Bound N = 33
Teachers	7	19	12	7
Administrative Subordinates	6	2	4	17
School Board	11	10	6	9
Others	4	2	6	0

half of the place bound superintendents indicated that their administrative subordinates was their second most important reference group; this was the case for 14 per cent of the career bound superintendents.

The data support the proposition that place bound superintendents, more than career bound superintendents, take their subordinates as reference groups. The reference group orientation of career bound superintendents is unclear. In neither the first or the second rankings do a majority of career bound types take any of the groups as a reference group. In other words, their career pattern is not such that it binds them to a clearly identifiable reference group as is the case with place bound superintendents.

It was assumed that the higher commitment of the career bound men to the superintendency as a career would bind them to other school superintendents as a reference group. But this was not the case. It is interesting to note

that no superintendent ranked other superintendents first on the reference group question. Less than 15 per cent of the sample gave other superintendents a ranking higher than five.

A second reference group type question illuminates another difference between career and place bound types. The difference has been called "conflict in performance standards." The second reference group type question asked the men to rank the same groups "according to the accuracy with which they evaluate your work." On the 33 place bound superintendents, 11 or 33 per cent ranked the same group first on both questions. Sixty-eight per cent of the career bound superintendents ranked the same group first on both questions. Said another way, 67 per cent of the place bound superintendents shifted their group orientation and thus exhibited "conflict in performance" standards when the question changed from the most important to the most accurate group and 32 per cent of the career bound superintendents shifted their group orientation when the question changed from the most important to the most accurate group. It can be said, then, that the career pattern of the place bound superintendent binds him to a reference group that in his judgment is not the most accurate in evaluating his work as a school superintendent.

Summary and Implications

This paper has emphasized behavioral differences between two types of school superintendents; those who achieve their positions through promotion in the home district (place bound) and those who achieve their positions through movement from one school system to another (career bound). The behavioral areas examined were rate of adoption of educational innovations, positions in the social structure of school superintendents, and reference group orientations. Data collected by interview from 61 superintendents in one county reveal that (a) career bound superintendents are quicker to adopt educational innovations than place bound superintendents; (b) place bound men are less involved in the social network of superintendents and have lower status among chief school officials than career bound men; and (c) the reference group of place bound superintendents is formed by their subordinates (administrative assistants and teachers), this, however, is not the reference group of career bound chief school officials. In addition, it was found that the career history of place bound superintendents binds them to a reference group that in their judgment is not the most accurate in evaluating their work. All of these findings were predictable from the fundamental differences in the career histories of the two types of superintendents.

These findings taken together with other data[10] on career bound and place bound school superintendents seem to make it abundantly clear that the variable of the origin of the school superintendent (achievement of position through promotion in the home district or through movement from one school system to another) has considerable power and utility in predicting meaningful differences in administrative performance of school superintendents.

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[10]See R. O. Carlson, Executive Succession and Organizational Change, op. cit.

In addition, the findings imply something about the location of leadership among members of the school superintendency profession or at least its distribution among these two career types. Over and over, the implication can be seen in the data; in the distribution of opinion leadership, in the distribution of friendship choices, and in the varying rates of adoption of educational innovations. The data suggest that the leaders of the profession are career bound superintendents.